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## THE END OF THE ALLIANCE OF THE EMPERORS<sup>1</sup>

### I.

AFTER having triumphed over two great powers, Austria and France, in the campaigns of 1866 and 1870, Germany in 1879 expected to see them contract alliances intended to revenge themselves for the defeats which they had suffered at her hands. This apprehension occupied in the strongest manner the mind of Prince Bismarck, who, according to Count Peter Shuvalov, Russian ambassador in London, saw on all sides coalitions plotted against Germany. To preserve the empire from all danger, the chancellor deemed it necessary to conclude at least a defensive alliance with one power. He must make his choice between Austria and Russia. An alliance with the latter would, in his judgment, be more solid and more durable, because of the bonds of friendship which for many years had united the two imperial courts, of the monarchical sentiments which were dominant in both empires, and of the absence in Russia of those heterogeneous elements that work upon public opinion in Hungarian, Slavic, or Catholic circles in the Danubian monarchy. Yet despite all the advantages of an alliance with Russia, Bismarck preferred to turn toward Austria-Hungary, for if Germany should join herself to the empire of the tsars, she would more or less sacrifice her relations with the other powers, and would, in the case of a conflict with Austria and France, incur the danger of finding herself, by reason of her geographical situation, at the mercy of Russia. The latter power, placed at the extreme east of Europe, always had the means of escaping from attack. A treaty of alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary was signed at Vienna on October 7, 1879; it was an arrangement purely defensive, in the case of aggression on the part of Russia or of any other power against either one of the contracting parties.

But the chancellor himself had no confidence in the stability and continuance of the alliance with Austria. Uneasy as to the fate of the provinces taken away from France, he sought for the most

<sup>1</sup> Revolutionary events having laid open the archives of the Russian Foreign Office to the use of scholars, down to dates much later than have hitherto been customary, Mr. Serge Goriainov, formerly archivist of that ministry, and afterward senator, has prepared for the *American Historical Review*, from materials found in those archives, the following article.

suitable means of safeguarding Germany against every conflict with her western neighbor. In truth, the Austro-German treaty did not prevent France from allying herself with Russia against Germany. It was necessary to forestall such an alliance, to secure from Russia that she should remain neutral in case of attack upon Germany or Austria. An agreement between the three emperors was arranged, and the document embodying it was signed on June 6/18, 1881, by Saburov, Bismarck, and Széchenyi.

The first article of this treaty was thus expressed :

In case one of the three powers should find itself at war with a fourth great power, the other two will preserve a benevolent neutrality toward it, and will devote their efforts to the localizing of the conflict.

This stipulation shall also apply to a war between one of the three powers and Turkey, but only in case a previous agreement has been arranged between the three courts relative to the results of that war.

In the special case that one of them shall have obtained from one of its two allies a more positive assistance, the obligation of the present article shall continue in full force for the third.

This agreement was concluded for a period of three years. Well in advance of its expiration, the minister of foreign affairs called together a council at Moscow, on May 20, 1883, to deliberate on the question whether reasons of state required a renewal of this treaty. Mr. Peter Saburov, ambassador of Russia at Berlin, held that this *entente* was more advantageous to Germany than to Russia. Three years before, it was sufficient for the needs of the moment ; now, it was no longer capable of securing Russian interests. The first article, while leaving to Germany entire freedom of action in the West, conditioned all action in the East upon a previous agreement with Germany and Austria. For this reason, a renewal of the treaty ought not to be brought about except upon the basis of a perfect equality between the advantages secured to Russia and those secured to Germany, or upon the condition of giving both powers entire freedom, the one in the East, the other in the West, or, at any rate, of making that freedom conditional, in both cases, upon previous accord.

Of these two alternatives, the first seemed more advantageous to Russia, as leaving full liberty of action on both sides. In the case of a disintegration of Turkey, the occupation of the Straits was for us a vital question, the answer to which would have been greatly facilitated by our having procured in advance the assent of Germany and Austria to our acting according to our own desires in the Orient. A complete neutrality on the part of these powers would guarantee us against a European coalition and would isolate England, which would never yield to us the Straits.

The other high officials who took part in the deliberations, Giers, Count Miliutin, Prince Lobanov-Rostovski, while recognizing the force of Saburov's comments, were of the opinion that Bismarck would never consent to the modifications which he proposed.

In a memoir dated in December, 1883, Baron Jomini, first counsellor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, set forth the arguments for renewing the treaty of 1881 for three years, without any modifications. In his view the programme worked out at Livadia in 1879 was a preparation for arriving at our sole objective—Constantinople and the Straits—by the following means: (1) the restoration of financial equilibrium by the retiring of fifty million rubles of bank-notes per annum; (2) the creation of a fleet in the Black Sea; (3) an understanding with our neighbors to make sure of their neutrality. Now as notes to the amount of more than four hundred millions of rubles had been emitted for the last war, we should, if we retired fifty millions per annum, need eight or ten years to re-establish our currency. The creation of an adequate fleet would call for still more time. The result would be that if we should at this time conclude an arrangement with Germany based on a full liberty of action toward France on her part, in exchange for a full liberty of action on our part at Constantinople and in the Dardanelles, Germany would be obtaining an immediate advantage and would be giving us nothing more than an assurance which we could realize only at the end of some fifteen years. It was beyond all question that as soon as Bismarck had assured himself of our neutrality, he would seize the first occasion to finish with France. Without sufficient funds for war and without a fleet, should we be able at that same time to finish with Constantinople and the Straits, in face of England's opposition? And if we could not do it simultaneously, could we reckon upon it that Germany, freed from all fear on the side of France and become all-powerful in Europe, would at any later time aid us in good faith to realize our Oriental programme? If on the other hand we contented ourselves with renewing our arrangements for three years, we should be gaining time, indispensable for our preparations, and we should be fortifying the *status quo*, because Germany, reassured for the moment, would have less reason to precipitate a decisive conflict with France, on which the Emperor William would probably not resolve except in case of absolute necessity; because France, knowing that she could not count on us, would be less disposed to embark upon the terrible adventure of *revanche*; and finally because, since the triple *entente* was based on the maintenance of the Treaty of Berlin, the joint action of the

three courts would be able to prevent any violent shocks of a sort likely to bring on the collapse of Turkey.

About this same time Giers, while travelling from Petrograd to Montreux, stopped at Berlin, where he was very graciously received by the Emperor William and the Crown Prince Frederick. He did not fail to go to Friedrichsruhe and see the chancellor. His impressions of this visit are set down in a letter which he wrote from Montreux on November 7/19, 1883, to his assistant Vlangali:

Bismarck came to meet me at the railroad station, and took me in his carriage to his house, where I was served to luncheon. Arriving at two o'clock, I left Friedrichsruhe at 10 P. M., to spend the night at Hamburg. I began my conversation with the chancellor by telling him of the agreeable impression I had received from my audience with the emperor. "Yes", said he, "one could not sufficiently pray the good God to prolong the days of our venerable sovereign. One can have full confidence in him, and as for me I entirely share his sentiments toward Russia, and his desire to keep up relations of friendship with her. In this I fulfil faithfully my duty toward him." Then Bismarck endeavored to demonstrate to me that during his whole political career he had constantly favored alliance with Russia, though on our side he had not always been rightly understood. He dwelt long on this idea, that it would have been very useful for us to have an understanding with Austria to determine the sphere of our influence in the Balkans. I remarked that the formal delimitation of spheres of influence was quite difficult to achieve; thus, we could not give up either Montenegro or Servia to the exclusive influence of Vienna. Bismarck showed himself entirely ready to enter into negotiations for the renewal of the agreement of the three emperors. From Saburov's explanations, he had drawn the conclusion that we wished to enlarge its scope, to go back to the propositions advanced at Reichstadt, and to take up the questions connected with the fall of the Ottoman Empire. "The problem is very difficult", said he, "but all the same we had resolved, Count Kalnóky and I, to listen to your proposals." "Very difficult, indeed", I replied, "and in fact not very suitable, since we mean to maintain friendly relations with the sultan, but it would be better not to go too fast, and for the moment simply to renew the treaty, making any needed alterations." Bismarck undertook to prove to me the great utility of a *rapprochement*, and even of a close alliance between the three emperors. He said that he would have been ready to propose outright an offensive and defensive alliance between them. It was true that, in view of present circumstances, it could not call itself a Holy Alliance, but nevertheless it would be quite as profitable to Europe as that one, by maintaining peace for many years. This proposition surprised me not a little; I did not consider myself authorized to accept it; moreover its value to Russia, in the actual state of European affairs, seemed to be in truth quite doubtful; therefore I did not dwell upon it, but observed to the chancellor that the situation in the three empires did not appear to me very favorable for attaining such a result.

I then proposed to him that certain corrections should be made in the text of the treaty, among others the omission of the third paragraph

of the first article, which appeared to me entirely useless and which set up a certain inequality between the contracting parties. Bismarck understood me at once. He proceeded immediately to assure me that this paragraph was useful to us, for, in case Russia should ally herself with Austria in a war against Turkey, Germany would be under obligation to hold back England; but when I said to him that such an eventuality would certainly not come about soon and that one might much more probably expect that Germany in alliance with Austria and perhaps with Italy should attack France, he accepted my proposal and promised me that he would uphold it at Vienna.

In the course of the conversation Bismarck declared to Giers that he would abandon his political career after the death of the Emperor William, for the Crown Prince was an admirer of Gladstone, whose system was in no wise suitable to Germany. "Everything will go to pieces then", said Bismarck. This idea pursued him and he was endeavoring to consolidate as firmly as possible the structure he had reared. In Bismarck's opinion the friendship of Russia was one of the guarantees of the existence of the German Empire. The chancellor considered the *entente* with Russia as of more importance than all of the alliances with Austria and Italy. In view of these sentiments of the chancellor toward Russia, Giers sought to be agreeable to him by saying that the Emperor Alexander relied on him to tighten the bonds of friendship between the two empires and to maintain peace. These words pleased the chancellor very much. "I beg you", said he, "to lay me at the feet of his Majesty with the expression of my profound gratitude for his confidence in me and to assure him that I shall use every endeavor to be worthy of it; after the interests of Germany, it is those of the Emperor Alexander that I shall serve the most faithfully."

On his return, Giers stopped at Vienna, where he was received by the Emperor Francis Joseph and had an interview with Count Kalnóky. The visits he had paid to Berlin and to Vienna contributed to the success of the negotiations for the renewal of the alliance of the three emperors. The entire negotiation was confided to Prince Orlov, who was appointed ambassador at Berlin in place of Saburov. The instruction which he received on February 8, 1884, declared that the emperor, persevering in the pacific policy he had announced, desired to keep up relations of friendship with Germany; yet he would have preferred to have his action free from every engagement, that he might use it according to his own conviction with a view to general peace and the interests of Russia. But, under present circumstances, a refusal to renew the previous arrangements or a proposal to restrict their continuance to too short a term, would have aroused distrust, or perhaps even have led to

political combinations which it was important to avoid in order to maintain the pacific understanding between the three imperial courts. That understanding was more indispensable than ever, in order to strengthen the principle of monarchical order in face of the increasing peril of social revolution. This common feeling was the bond which should unite sovereigns and governments in a strict solidarity. But good intentions and fair words would not be sufficient, if they were not translated into facts.

Under this view, the emperor had received with satisfaction two practical assurances that had been given to M. de Giers, the one by Prince Bismarck, the other by Count Kalnóky. The first was that the German chancellor was firmly resolved to preserve peace with France and avoid every provocation, even in case of restoration of the Orleans dynasty, provided that restoration were not brought about upon the programme of a war of revenge. The second was that Count Kalnóky did not intend to press for an extension of the political action of Austria in the Balkan peninsula, nor even to bring about immediately a definitive and formal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. France had at Berlin, in Prince Orlov, a sincere friend, and at need, a warm advocate. Undoubtedly the emperor would not have encouraged France to incur the risks attendant upon a rupture with Germany; France, in the situation in which she then stood, could not even be considered as an element in our political calculations. But the emperor would not have wished to see her disappear from the European scene under the blows of Germany or in the convulsions of anarchy. To have a monarchical, strong, and prosperous France would have been for our interest and would have made for the normal equilibrium of Europe; it might have been one more guarantee of general peace and social order. For the moment, the essential end of his Majesty's policy was to obtain several years of calm in the *status quo*; and the advanced age of the Emperor William made this a possibility. What was requisite was to eliminate those external and unforeseen causes which might interrupt this state of things; a renewal of the triple *entente* might contribute to this, on the one side by contenting France, on the other side by reassuring Germany. It was this thought that inspired his Majesty's determination. The triple *entente* was renewed for three years with some modifications in the text of the treaty, among them the excision of the third paragraph of the first article. The act was signed at Berlin on March 15/27, 1884, by Orlov, Bismarck, and Széchenyi.

## II.

In his annual report for 1887, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that Russia, in putting herself into accord with Germany and Austria in 1881, had had in view the maintenance of the general peace, which Russia needed after the war which had exhausted her. It was certain that the general peace would be more firmly assured by an *entente* of the three emperors than by a separate alliance of two of them. Such were the considerations which had determined the late emperor to enter into this pacific triple *entente*. But the turn of events in the Balkan peninsula brought out an irreconcilable antagonism between us and Austria. In vain did we, at each renewal of the triple *entente*, exert ourselves to remove the causes of conflict; the result was, definitely, that Austria had entered, without striking a blow, into full possession of the provinces which she had wrested from Turkey, and from them was dominating Serbia and crushing Montenegro, while Russia saw the influence she had so dearly acquired in Bulgaria destroyed by foreign intrigues in which Austria had certainly had a large part. Such results made a disturbing impression upon Russian public opinion. And since under the triple *entente* Austrian policy clearly rested upon the alliance with Germany, the latter was in our country involved in the same disapproval which was visited upon Austria. The Berlin cabinet was accused of bad faith and duplicity; the organs of the Russian press set forth with approval the idea of opposing, to an alliance which had been weakened by want of confidence in the two neighboring empires, a close *rapprochement* with France based upon community of interests. The French press naturally seized upon this situation, and the turbulent elements in France exploited it passionately, to further their plans of *revanche*. The violence of this unrestrained polemic, disturbing the German mind, reacted ultimately upon the governments, and the tension of their states of opinion was shown by a series of military, financial, and economic measures which could not fail to poison their mutual relations. In the presence of such a state of affairs, the tsar deemed it no longer possible to renew the agreement of the three emperors, the pacific purpose of which could no longer be achieved. In fact at the beginning of the year 1887, a bill was introduced in the Reichstag according to the terms of which the strength of the German imperial army on a peace footing would be raised from 427,000 men to 468,000, for the period of the next seven years. In the session of January 11, 1887, Bismarck, going into the tribune himself to support the bill, said:



Not one voice in France has renounced Alsace-Lorraine; at any moment a government may be established which will declare war. It may break out in ten days as readily as in ten years; nothing can be answered for. The war of 1870 was but child's play in comparison with the future war; on both sides an effort will be made to finish the adversary, to bleed him white, that the vanquished may not be able to rise again, and may never, for thirty years, dare even to think of the possibility of turning against the conqueror.

The Reichstag consented to increase the army for only three years instead of seven; it was dissolved, with a view to a new election.

This menacing language of Prince Bismarck and the armament of Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium alarmed France, which, on its side, proceeded to construct cantonments along its frontier, for shelter to the reservists in case they were called, and began a reorganization of its army in accordance with the plans of General Boulanger, minister of war. In a conversation with Baron Mohrenheim, ambassador of Russia, Flourens, who then had charge of foreign affairs, set forth the necessity for France to hold herself ready on short notice, while at the same time he scrupulously avoided giving any handle to false imputation of warlike designs; he repudiated all such in emphatic terms, sincerely and absolutely desiring, and intending, nothing but peace. France would not attack Germany unless the latter were strongly engaged elsewhere.

In reporting this conversation, Mohrenheim remarked that the government of the Republic sought for the moral support of Russia in case Germany should demand disarmament on the part of France. On reading this despatch, the Emperor Alexander III. noted on the margin that in such case France could count upon the moral support of Russia. M. de Giers, on his part, wrote to Mohrenheim, January 22, 1887, that the apprehensions of Flourens, as to aggressive intentions on the part of Bismarck, were exaggerated, for the latter had many times given assurances that Germany would not attack France. The declaration of Flourens that France would not declare war on Germany unless the latter was strongly engaged elsewhere, was worthy of attention; if that were the case the chances for maintaining peace appeared far from being exhausted; and as peace was for the interest of all governments, it could not logically be contrary to their intentions. In M. de Giers's view, of all the causes that might embitter the relations between Germany and France, one of the most potent would be the suspicion of an agreement between France and Russia inimical to Germany, for a strict friendship between Russia and Germany was the firmest security for

France as for all Europe. M. de Mohrenheim was to convey these views to Flourens, assuring him that an *entente* between France and Russia would certainly embitter relations between Germany and France.

The government of the Republic was entirely aware of the cogent reasons in favor of a good understanding between Russia and Germany, and accepted the view that Bismarck, if secure of good relations with Russia, would exert all his efforts to assure to the empire he had created a peaceful development. Eminently desirous to please the Russian ambassador and to defer to his advice, the French cabinet sought a sure means of consulting the imperial cabinet in great secrecy, through a confidential person, sent for that special purpose. The tsar minuted upon Mohrenheim's telegram on this subject the words, "This might be very useful to us, in certain contingencies [*à un moment donné*], and we ought not to discourage them". The person chosen for the purpose was Count Melchior de Vogüé. But Baron Mohrenheim did not deem it necessary at that time to have recourse to this intermediary.

In the course of that same year the secret treaty of the three emperors was to expire. The triple agreement was the basis of the ministerial policy of Giers. Voices were raised in Russia in criticism of it, and in denunciation of it as harmful to Russian interests. Several diplomats, such as Count Ignatiev, Saburov, Tatishchev, and others, won over to their side the publicist Katkov, who undertook a bitter campaign against the minister of foreign affairs. Giers nevertheless was able to obtain the emperor's approval. In a letter of November, 1886, to Count Shuvalov, ambassador in Berlin, he wrote that his Majesty continued to attach value to the understanding with Germany, but that the emperor wished that it should be serious, sincere, and complete. On his part Shuvalov, while appreciating the traditional friendship of the courts of Prussia and Russia and the advantages which our country might derive from it, observed that one did not need to be a great politician to convince himself of the immense profit it was to Germany to be united to us in a strong and durable manner, for the assurances of support, or rather of neutrality, with respect to Bulgaria, which Germany bestowed upon us in abundant measure, cost her very little. In spite of all the outcries in the delegations at Pesth, the Berlin cabinet knew very well that Austria would not dare to undertake anything against us, that she would not go beyond platonic protestations. Germany risked nothing in declaring to us that Austria could not reckon upon her aid nor even upon her moral support. But was it not necessary to

think of other eventualities—by hypothesis, that we should be forced, in spite of ourselves, to be embroiled with Austria? For such a case, Shuvalov asks, if the triple alliance should proceed to crumble, might it not be replaced by some dual arrangement effected before the explosion should take place? Would it not be possible to obtain some understanding that in these conditions would guarantee us on the side of Austria and her probable allies? At the moment there was in existence a triple agreement and also another alongside it, based on interests common to our two allies. Shuvalov questions whether a third might not be brought into existence, between Germany and ourselves, based on interests concerning us especially; *do ut des*. The chancellor, having no other thought and desire than the securing of general peace, could hardly refuse combinations which alone could secure him that result.

To this question of Shuvalov, Giers replied, September 14, that the idea of substituting a dual alliance for the triple alliance was a very good one, and was in all points agreeable to the tsar's desire, which was to strengthen in permanent shape our understanding with Germany. But how bring this about? At the beginning of the negotiations which had resulted in the signing of our secret arrangements of 1881, our intention had been to make them with Germany alone. Our object was to guard ourselves against the danger of the coalitions which the complicated execution of the treaty of Berlin threatened at every instant to raise against Russia, and to deprive Great Britain, particularly aggressive at that time, of every ally in case she should decide to make war upon us. On the other hand it was important to us to cause Germany to share our point of view respecting the principle of the closing of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and to lead her to enforce at Constantinople respect for the treaties in which that principle had been embodied.

Germany on her side asked that we should assure her of our neutrality and of the limitation of the conflict in case she should find herself at war with France, and that we should respect the integrity of Austria, provided the latter did not extend her action into the Orient beyond the limits indicated by the treaty of Berlin, unless on previous arrangement with us.

Such had been, on one side and on the other, the fundamental bases of Saburov's negotiations. But Bismarck had speedily declared that it would be difficult for him to enter into the proposed engagements without associating Austria in them, bound as he was to Austria by previous arrangements. The chancellor moreover considered the participation of Vienna in our treaty as very desir-

able, with a view toward emphasizing the powerful agreement of the three empires in the face of the republican and anarchical tendencies which were devastating the rest of Europe, and also toward reducing the chance that Austria, left at one side and entirely free, should seek, on some turn of events, either to join Great Britain against us or to join France against Germany. This last conjunction was not likely, but it was quite possible that at the least complication Austria should seek alliance with Great Britain against us. Since, moreover, Bismarck had declared that in case of war between Russia and Austria he could not go beyond seeing to it that neither one of the two belligerents was mortally wounded, and since, for our part, we could perceive no chance of war between Austria and Germany, the establishment of a triple *entente* was plainly indicated by the political necessities of the moment.

Undoubtedly this *entente* would be the best guarantee of peace, which Russia needed, especially with regard to her future development. The cabinet of Vienna, directed at this time by Baron Haymerle, had much hesitation in taking part in the alliance which we were preparing to negotiate with Germany. It would have preferred to remain outside, free from any engagement with us. When finally she consented to take part in our engagements, her attention naturally fell especially upon the article framed to guarantee the advantages secured to Austria by the treaty of Berlin, such as the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the clause relating to the sanjak of Novi-Bazar. In order to make the stipulations of this article more precise, it was agreed that a protocol should be joined to the treaty, setting forth the special questions on which agreement had been reached.

But the events which had occurred in Bulgaria in the course of 1886, of which a prince protected by Austria had availed himself to seize power in despite of the treaty of Berlin, without the assent of the other great powers, were not of a nature to encourage the least step toward *rapprochement* between Austria and Russia. Accordingly M. de Giers recommended Shuvalov to consider carefully the idea of an arrangement with Germany alone, which should have as its objects: (1) to surround the maintenance of peace with solid guarantees, indispensable to the development of our military, naval, and financial strength, and to guard us against the danger of European coalitions by sincere and firm alliance with the most powerful of the neighboring states, whose influence was at present decisive in most questions arising in Europe and even in the Orient; (2) to prevent any arbitrary alteration of the territorial *status quo*

in the Balkan peninsula and to cause it to be recognized that a preponderant influence on our part in the two Bulgarias was legitimate; (3) to guarantee as far as possible the inviolability of the Straits by assuring us of the firm support of Germany in proclaiming in decided terms, and in case of need enforcing, respect for this principle on the part of Turkey and of all powers signatory to the treaties in which it had been embodied.

In the first conference, on May 11, 1887, Shuvalov broached to Bismarck the question of a dual agreement. He reminded the chancellor of the words which the latter had spoken some time before. "If France attacks us, we shall do our part to defend ourselves, but we shall not precipitate ourselves against the French fortified lines." The principal object of Germany was, then, to guard herself against aggression on the part of France, relying upon our benevolent neutrality in the case of a war of revenge. Such was Bismarck's understanding; he said:

In case of aggression on the part of France we have your benevolent neutrality. You have ours in the case of a war with any third power, Great Britain, Turkey, Austria. The case of a war between you and Austria is one that would embarrass me extremely because of certain engagements which bind us to that power. What will you have? They are of such a sort that they do not permit us to accept without reservation your first article, in the form which you have given to it.<sup>2</sup>

With these words, the chancellor took out of his portfolio the secret convention of 1879 between Germany and Austria, renewed in 1884 for five years, and read it in German to Shuvalov, who then for the first time had knowledge of it, and learned positively that it was directed solely against an attack by Russia. Bismarck declared to Shuvalov that he sincerely regretted that the events of 1879 had compelled him to protect himself against us by means of this arrangement, but it nevertheless existed, and it would be disloyal toward us for him to accept the first article of our proposed convention, in view of the disclosure he had just made. Could we not, said he, add to article first the following words: "with the exception of the contingency provided for in the treaty subsisting between Germany and Austria, in case the latter should be attacked by Russia".

Shuvalov replied that such a condition reversed the meaning of the whole article; and moreover, if unexpected complications in the Balkan peninsula should arise to affect our relations with Austria, a difficulty would at once present itself, namely, the difficulty of deciding on which side the aggression lay. In subsequent confer-

<sup>2</sup> For the first part of the first article, see below, p. 338.

ences the first article was subjected to further changes. Bismarck proposed to add the phrase, "saving the obligations arising to Germany from a defensive treaty existing between her and Austria". It appeared to Shuvalov that this version might be accepted, with the reservation that Germany should equally take account of the Emperor Alexander's desire to promise his benevolent neutrality in case of war between Germany and France in which the former should be the aggressor. He proposed to add the words, "and saving also, for Russia, the case of an attack on France by Germany".

This proposal of Shuvalov was displeasing to Bismarck. He exclaimed with much disappointment that nothing justified such an addition, that if there was any need to speak of certain obligations resting on Germany, it was because they flowed from a regular treaty, while we were not bound to France by any document, and, finally, that the treaty subsisting between Germany and Austria was purely defensive and, in a way, guaranteed France against any aggression on the part of Germany. Shuvalov endeavored to calm the chancellor's irritation by assuring him that no ulterior designs were cherished by us, that the emperor's purpose was to preserve the equilibrium of Europe. Just as his Majesty was ready to maintain a benevolent neutrality in a war of revenge intended to wrest conquered provinces from Germany, so also his Majesty would not be willing to see a mortal blow inflicted on either one of the belligerent parties. The allusion to the possibility of revenge on the part of France angered the prince. He cried, "Not strike a mortal blow? What does that mean? Nobody proposes to annihilate France. Moreover, is it possible to destroy a nationality?"

As it was not possible to agree upon the wording of the additional phrases, Shuvalov proposed to go back to the original draft of the first article, to make no mention of either Austria or France, and to take up this question in an entirely distinct clause and dispose of it, at need, by an exchange of notes, which while explaining and setting forth the obligations of Germany toward Austria should also mention the desire of the Emperor Alexander III. to see France preserved from any mortal blow that might be inflicted under certain circumstances. "Let us come back then", said the chancellor, "to the version which I proposed to you the other day, that is, to rewrite article I. in a sense specially defensive in the case of a war with a third power". Shuvalov would not accept this version. In truth, of what advantage would it be to us to have the benefits of benevolent neutrality only in case of attack by some third power?

Was it our fault if we had more enemies than Germany, which had but one? Could we bind ourselves, in respect to Austria and especially in respect to Turkey, to remain impassive in the face of every threat, perhaps even that of having the hostility of Germany in case we should see ourselves obliged to act in a direction which she might judge to be aggressive?

But then [replied Bismarck] you ask us for our neutrality in case of war between you and England or Turkey or Italy, and you concede to us in return only a half-neutrality, and that merely in case of war between us and France. Let us grant that this half-neutrality is the equivalent of that which we promise you in the case of war between you and Austria; but we should still be undertaking three whole ones besides. Now, is that fair?

Shuvalov refused to follow the chancellor into this discussion. He had been instructed to propose to the court of Berlin a dual arrangement. He knew the ideas of the emperor and of M. de Giers, both of whom looked upon the neutrality of Russia in a war between Germany and France as the equivalent for the reservations which the chancellor made toward us by reason of Germany's obligations toward Austria-Hungary. Moreover, a convention between Germany and Russia without reservations as to the possibility of a dismemberment would have been more than unpopular among us; it was impossible to ignore the disturbed state of Russian public opinion since the treaty of Berlin, which, rightly or wrongly, was regarded as having deprived us of all the advantages which we had attained at so great a cost.

At a loss for further arguments, Shuvalov confessed his inferiority, saying:

I assure you, Prince, that I do not feel strong enough to contend with you. I set things before you as they are. I assure you also that I have no feelings of personal pride about not succeeding in the negotiations which have been confided to me; I make it my sole object to fulfil scrupulously my duty. Therefore I speak frankly, without bargaining or haggling, and if I insist upon the clause concerning France, it is because I know that it is a condition *sine qua non*.

Bismarck took pity on his interlocutor. He collected himself and, after a few moments of reflection, dictated to Shuvalov this form of reservation of article I.: "This provision shall not apply to Austria and to France save in the case that one of the high contracting parties shall be attacked either by Austria or by France".

In the next interview, Bismarck proposed the following language: "This provision shall not apply to a war against Austria or France resulting from an attack made on one of those two powers

by one of the high contracting parties".<sup>3</sup> This form was adopted. The reading of the third article of the *projet*, relating to the closing of the Straits, brought out during the discussions the declaration by Bismarck, often repeated by him, that Germany was ready to see us masters of the Straits and established at Constantinople—that we might, in his phrase, possess the key to our own house. But this declaration could not appear in the principal instrument; it must be made a separate stipulation, for any indiscretion respecting it might be fatal to us by disclosing too early our aspirations. Similarly, by Bismarck's advice, the clause respecting the forbidding of entrance into the Black Sea was to be kept secret and drawn up separately. This task Shuvalov carried out; the secret clause was made the substance of one of the articles of the protocol annexed to the convention of June 6/18, 1887. That convention was concluded for three years instead of five as Shuvalov preferred, and signed by him and Count Herbert Bismarck. From the fact that the Emperor William had shortened the term of the convention, and that the chancellor had avoided signing it, by deputing his son to do so in his stead, M. de Giers believed he could infer that this arrangement was more advantageous to Russia than to Germany. On reading this remark of his minister the tsar added: "Perhaps". Austria had been excluded from the negotiation for reasons stated above in the ministerial report.

In the summer of this same year the Emperor William had a meeting with the Emperor Francis Joseph at Gastein. The latter expressed to his ally his regret at seeing Russia withdraw from the *entente* which had united the three courts, but William refrained from breathing a word of the arrangement concluded with Russia. "I shall do the same", said Bismarck to Shuvalov, "when I see Kalnóky".

### III.

The document of June 6/18, 1887, is thus expressed:

The Imperial Courts of Russia and Germany, animated by an equal desire to confirm general peace by an understanding designed to assure the defensive position of their respective states, have resolved to embody in a special arrangement the accord established between them, against the expiration on June 15/27, 1887, of the treaty signed in 1881 and renewed in 1884. To this end the plenipotentiaries of the two courts have agreed on the following articles:

Article I. In the case that one of the high contracting parties should find itself at war with a third great power, the other would

<sup>3</sup> "Cette disposition ne s'appliquerait pas à une guerre contre l'Autriche ou la France dans le cas où cette guerre résulterait d'une attaque dirigée contre l'une de ces dernières puissances par l'une des hautes parties contractantes."



maintain toward it a benevolent neutrality and would devote its efforts to the localization of the conflict.

This provision shall not apply to a war against Austria or France resulting from an attack made upon one of these two powers by one of the high contracting parties.

Article II. Germany recognizes the rights historically acquired by Russia in the Balkan peninsula, and particularly the rightfulness of a preponderating and decisive influence on her part in Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. The two courts pledge themselves to permit no modification of the territorial *status quo* in that peninsula without a previous agreement between them, and to oppose, as it arises, every attempt to disturb that *status quo* or to modify it without their consent.

Article III. The two courts recognize the European and naturally obligatory character of the principle of the closing of the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, founded on the law of nations, confirmed by treaties, and set forth in the declaration made by the second plenipotentiary of Russia at the Congress of Berlin, in the session of July 12 (Protocol 19). They will take care in common that Turkey makes no exception to this rule in favor of the interests of any government by lending to military operations of a belligerent power that portion of its empire adjoining the Straits. In case of infraction or to prevent infraction in case it is in prospect, the two courts shall warn Turkey that they would consider her, if such were to take place, as having put herself in a state of war with the injured party, and as having deprived herself henceforth of the benefits of security assured to her territorial *status quo* by the treaty of Berlin.

In a protocol signed the same day, it was declared that, in order to complete the stipulations of articles II. and III. of the treaty, the two courts had agreed upon the following points:

1. Germany, as in the past, will aid Russia to re-establish in Bulgaria a regular and legal government. She promises that she will in no case give her consent to the restoration of the Prince of Battenberg.

2. In case the Emperor of Russia should find himself obliged to take over the task of defending the entrance into the Black Sea in order to safeguard the interests of Russia, Germany engages to lend benevolent neutrality and her moral and diplomatic support to the measures which his Majesty shall deem it necessary to take in order to guard the key of his empire.

By the terms of the first article of the convention of June 6/18, 1887, Germany, after having protected herself by the Austrian treaty of 1879 against attack on the part of Russia, protected herself by a fresh agreement with Russia against attack on the side of France. This agreement is known by the name of the Reinsurance Treaty. Yet these diplomatic measures did not satisfy the chancellor's prudence; he did not cease to insist on the necessity of increasing the forces of Germany, and perfecting her armament. The number of soldiers under arms in time of peace amounted to 700,000 men. On February 6, 1888, Bismarck caused the text of

the treaty of alliance concluded with Austria on October 7, 1879, to be simultaneously published at Berlin, at Vienna, and at Pesth, in order to put an end, as was explained in the official *communiqué*, to false interpretations of that treaty, which had a purely defensive character. On the same date, in the session of February 6, 1888, the prince delivered a celebrated speech in which he essayed to prove that Germany must be strong enough to defend herself on both fronts, and so invulnerable that she should have no need to begin the attack. The conclusion of the speech resounded like a defiance to the whole world: "We Germans fear God and fear nothing else in the world".

The agreement between Germany and Russia had been made for three years. In 1889, well in advance of its expiration, the Russian minister of foreign affairs was instructed to study the question whether this arrangement with the German Empire should be renewed, and if so, in what form. The first article of the treaty required Germany, except in the case of our attacking Austria, to observe a benevolent neutrality and to endeavor to localize the conflict in any war which Russia might have with a third great power. This clause was not without value. Furthermore Germany promised not to attack France, and recognized that, if she did, she could no longer count on Russia's neutrality. In the East, Germany confirmed and solemnly recognized the principle of the closing of the Straits, and undertook to see to it that Turkey should not infringe upon it in favor of the interests of any government whatever. All these pledges were distinctly useful to us; and on her part Russia, except for the case of an attack by Germany upon France, agreed only to remain neutral, and to exert herself to localize the conflict, in the case of a war between Germany and one of the other great powers. Now, as aggressive action on the part of France was not at all probable, and a rupture between Germany and the other states still less so, this engagement was nowise onerous. Accordingly, December 19, 1889, by order of the tsar, it was agreed that these arrangements should be renewed, without, however, entering upon negotiations before April, 1890.

On February 12 of that year, in an intimate conversation, Bismarck confided to Shuvalov that it was very difficult for him to continue his functions in connection with the young emperor, and that he would like to resign. He said:

My sovereign, who at bottom has little confidence in his mother, has not been able to keep himself free from certain English influences which she brings to bear upon him. It is a veritable conspiracy of English radicals and German socialists. I had a little inkling of the

state of things when I saw the Empress Victoria return to Berlin. Then I asked myself, "What the devil does she mean to do here?" The instrument she makes use of with her son is Mr. Hinzpeter, his former governor, who, I believe, acts without much suspicion of the rôle he is being made to play. A man of liberal convictions, the empress has been able quite to engross him, and it is he, Hinzpeter, who for the moment is the great counsellor of my sovereign. I now see why I was held aloof, why the emperor sent word almost every day, through my son, to me at Friedrichsruhe, not to disturb myself. They were preparing the blow, and it was just at that time that the labor question was in the condition you know of. In spite of my small sympathy for any sort of liberal campaign, yet as a faithful subject I am under obligation not to abandon entirely to their fate the plans of my king. I have already spoken to you of my intention to retire completely from the Prussian administration. But will that be possible? The presidency of the Bundesrath is so closely bound up with my Prussian activities that it is difficult to preserve the former while resigning the latter. Perhaps the most practical thing will be, when the moment comes, to give up the whole thing.

The remainder of the conversation related, by preference, to foreign politics. Shuvalov made use of the opportunity to hint to the chancellor that the English influence, of which he had indicated the traces in internal politics, was also to be observed in international relations; this might bring about a sudden change in German policy and give rise to entirely new points of view. Then he suddenly reminded the chancellor of the existence of the secret treaty of 1887, and remarked that in his opinion that document, in spite of all the value which had been attributed to it on the one side and on the other, had really of itself exerted but a slight influence upon the good relations of the two empires, and that even without it such relations would without doubt have been maintained. "What do you think about that?" asked Shuvalov.

Oh! [replied the prince] if it is my personal opinion you ask, I shall reply without hesitation; yes, I vote for the continuance of our *entente*. I am quite ready to admit with you that our treaty has not, of itself alone, been indispensable to the maintenance of the good relations between us; nevertheless there it is, a document that defines clearly the policy which we are following and which, in my judgment, ought not to be changed. I have said it publicly, I have said it in intimate conversations with your sovereign, I have repeated it to you many times; my opinions, my sentiments are always the same. I take no interest whatever in Bulgaria or in Constantinople. You can do what you please there; it is not I who will prevent you. It is only the integrity of the Austro-Hungarian territory that we have to defend. You know that. There, in my eyes, is a political necessity. Austria cannot be wiped off the map of Europe; but as for your contentions outside her territory, that does not affect me. People once tried to frighten me by hinting to me that Austria might come to a direct understanding with Russia, and so transact her business without me. To that I replied that

it not only would not be unfortunate, but on the contrary very fortunate, and that certainly it would not be I that would be troubled by it. The disinterestedness that I profess in regard to Constantinople and the Straits would not be at all modified thereby. As for France, I believe that the fear of seeing us eat up that country has had time to evaporate. We should never be such fools as to commence a war that could bring us nothing.

Then taking up, after some moments of reflection, the chapter of hypotheses as to the future, he went on :

Here is how I see things. I do not believe in any deliberate hostility on the part of your emperor toward Germany; I do not even believe that in case of war between us and France you would immediately take up arms to assist that country. You would no doubt have recourse in such case to an armed demonstration, and if the first victories were favorable to us, you would check us by indicating to us that we were not to go farther. We are moreover not greedy for new provinces. Those we now have give us already quite enough trouble, and after all is said, one does not destroy nationalities. I will even go so far as to say that the preservation of France is a necessity to Germany also, in view of certain eventualities that might come forward in our relations with England. When I was at Reims, somebody said to me, "Go ahead and crown your king emperor of Germany and of Gaul". I laughed, and said, even then, "Nationalities are not wiped out by a stroke of the pen, as witness the Polish nationality, which has managed to keep itself in existence in spite of having lost its political unity".

Count Shuvalov observed to the chancellor that the secret treaty defined, in a decisive and unmistakable manner, the point of view of Russia in respect to France; that it was precisely the case of attack that it provided for, and that the integrity of the French territory was an essential condition of the maintenance of the balance in Europe. Prince Bismarck on his part declared that the secret treaty, in his opinion, corresponded so exactly to the situation which the two contracting parties had both desired to create, that even to define its duration would be, strictly speaking, unnecessary, the text of the agreement being, so to speak, the expression of a fixed and unchanging situation.

Count Shuvalov ended his despatch by concluding that the chancellor would ask nothing better than to renew our reciprocal engagements, and the tsar minuted at the end the following words: "I think, in effect, that to Bismarck our *entente* is in some sort a guarantee that no written agreement exists between us and France, and that is very important for Germany".

After an absence of some weeks, Shuvalov on March 5/17 called on the chancellor at the latter's invitation. He found him in a state of great excitement, for the resignation of the prince and of

his son had been accepted. The divergence of opinion between Emperor William II. and his chancellor on internal questions had extended to foreign policy, in which, the prince declared, one of the grievances that the emperor had represented to him was the Russophile policy which Bismarck had pursued up to that time. The same imputation is reported by Prince Clovis Hohenlohe in his memoirs.<sup>4</sup> William II. had no confidence in the foreign policy of Bismarck. He suspected him of having private views which he was concealing, of wishing to abandon Austria and the Triple Alliance in order to join hands with Russia, while the emperor, who had given his word to Francis Joseph to be a faithful ally to him, held to the treaty with Austria-Hungary.

Count Shuvalov wrote that what was then passing at Berlin was more than strange, and that one was forced to ask oneself whether the young emperor was in his normal state. In the night of March 9/21 the ambassador was awakened by a messenger from Emperor William, who requested him to come to his Majesty at eight o'clock in the morning. Scarcely had he arrived at the hour indicated, when he was received by the emperor with a kindness and cordiality beyond all expression :

Sit down and listen to me [he said]; you know how much I love and respect your sovereign. Your emperor has been too good to me for me to do otherwise than to inform him personally of the situation created by the events which have just taken place. Tell his Majesty, then, that I have parted with my old chancellor, for it was truly impossible to keep on working with him in view of the state of his health and the excitable condition of his nerves. Herbert Bismarck told me last evening that you were authorized by your sovereign to pursue the negotiations respecting the renewal of our secret treaty, but that at present you had abandoned them. Why? I beg you to tell his Majesty that on my part I am entirely disposed to renew our agreement, that my foreign policy remains and will remain the same as it was in the time of my grandfather. That is my firm resolve. I shall not depart from it, and you can resume your negotiations with Count Herbert. He wishes to leave me, I believe, but I shall try to keep him at his post.

Shuvalov replied that he had been obliged to suspend negotiations because of not knowing who were the persons with whom he was to conduct them.

I was informed of your conversation with Prince Bismarck [replied the emperor], and the chancellor was also authorized to conduct the negotiations to the consummation that we intended; nothing has changed, then, and I rely upon your friendship to lay the situation before your emperor, assuring him that nothing has changed either in

<sup>4</sup> *Denkwürdigkeiten des Fürsten Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst*, II. 465-466 (II. 424 of Eng. trans.).

my personal sentiments toward him or in my policy in regard to Russia. . . .

You know [he went on], how many malevolent assertions accompanied my advent to the throne. People attributed war-like tendencies to me, said I was eager for glory, etc., etc. Yet I have done whatever I could for the preservation of peace, and that is what I desire for Germany, that is what I strive for in my foreign policy, just as much as I desire the preservation of order in internal affairs.

After having read Count Shuvalov's despatch, the tsar wrote on it the following annotation: "Nothing more satisfactory could be looked for. We shall see by the sequel whether deeds correspond to words. For the moment it is quite reassuring." On the proposal of Count Herbert, the negotiation of the *entente* was transferred to St. Petersburg and entrusted to General Schweinitz, German ambassador at the court of Russia. He was well acquainted with the affair, while those at the ministry at Berlin had not yet mastered it. General Schweinitz had to wait a long time for his instructions, and when they arrived at Berlin, he found that Germany refused to renew the agreement with Russia.

In making his explanations to M. de Giers on March 26, 1890, the general described the new chancellor's point of view on the relations between Germany and Russia. General Caprivi declared that there would be no change in those relations, that his policy would be simple and transparent, would give no occasion for any misunderstanding, and would cause neither alarm nor distrust. Caprivi's view was that such a policy did not admit of a secret agreement, especially with Russia, where public opinion would be little in favor of such a compact. On the report made by M. de Giers the tsar wrote the following annotations:

In my secret heart, I am well content that Germany has been the first to refuse the renewal of the treaty, and I do not particularly regret the ending of the *entente*. But the new chancellor's views about our relations are very significant. It appears to me that Bismarck was right when he said that the policy of the German emperor would alter from the day that he, Bismarck, should retire.

To Count Shuvalov's mind, Caprivi's refusal to renew the agreement could have two explanations: one, that William counted on the accession of Great Britain to the Triple Alliance, the other, that the new chancellor took the alliance with Austria more seriously than his predecessor had done. Caprivi had said to Shuvalov that he was little versed in the intricacies of diplomacy; his predecessor was strong enough to juggle with several balls at once, while he considered himself lucky if he succeeded with only two.

The arguments which Caprivi used to justify his refusal to re-

new the agreement with Russia seemed far from convincing to M. de Giers. It was true that in a former time relations of friendship could subsist between the two courts without any formal treaty, but since then the situation had become quite different: Germany had contracted alliances confirming the so-called league of peace which under certain circumstances might take on a character far from consistent with good relations between us and the cabinet of Berlin. Under these conditions, the advice of Prince Bismarck respecting the expediency of guaranteeing our mutual interests against every eventuality by means of a treaty seemed to M. de Giers very judicious. Accordingly he did not conceal from Schweinitz his surprise at seeing Caprivi's objections prevail over the intentions and desires personally expressed by his sovereign. He did not wish in the least to doubt the sincerity of the emperor's words, or those of the chancellor, but he would have wished that Shuvalov should have taken pains to clear up this enigma by leading General Caprivi to make a categorical statement in one form or another. Shuvalov might have suggested to him the idea of an exchange of notes declaring that, without renewing the secret treaty of 1887, the two powers desired to confirm the relations of perfect friendship subsisting between them, by stating the continued validity of the bases of their *entente*, both in respect to the question of the Balkan peninsula and in respect to the closing of the Straits.

In dealing with this proposition on the part of the minister, Shuvalov asked himself first of all, what motives might have determined Caprivi not to renew the secret arrangement with Russia. In the first place, the chancellor believed that a *rapprochement* between Germany and Russia would not be in harmony with public opinion on our side. And on general principles he doubted the value of treaties not founded on the real expression of national sentiments; hence his fears as to the consequences which might ensue in case our secret arrangements should ever be disclosed.

At this point in the despatch the Emperor Alexander writes on the margin: "This is more than correct".

There existed also a second consideration which in the mind of the young sovereign militated against a renewal of our agreement. William hoped to win over England to the so-called league of peace. This would evidently be a matter of capital importance for us, for it would touch our secret treaty on an essential side, that of our preponderant influence in Bulgaria and of the possession of Constantinople. Shuvalov had always viewed with suspicion the accord which for two years past had tended to become established between

Great Britain and Germany, in spite of the friction due to the divergent colonial interests of the two countries, especially in Central Africa. Yet, thanks to the spirit of conciliation displayed on both sides, the delimiting of their respective spheres of influence in Africa had had results surpassing in its effect the most roseate expectations, principally by the cession to the Emperor William of the island of Heligoland, so important to Germany by reason of its geographical situation between the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser. In return, Great Britain received large advantages in Africa.

Shuvalov saw in the concessions which the two governments had made to each other clear evidence of their mutual efforts to strengthen intimate and cordial relations. Herein lay, in his view, the motives which had dissuaded the German chancellor from renewing the secret arrangement with Russia. Should we not risk failure if we entered upon negotiations with Caprivi with a view to suggesting the substitution, for our existing compact, of an exchange of notes declaring the continued maintenance of the bases of the old *entente*? So Shuvalov asked himself. The tsar made the following note upon the report which M. de Giers made to him on June 11, 1890:

I am rather of Shuvalov's opinion. Once it appears that Germany is indisposed to renew our secret agreement, it seems to me that our dignity does not permit us to ask why. We shall see what is the matter when the Emperor and Caprivi come here. No doubt a change has come over German policy, and we ought to be prepared for any event.

In another annotation of June 14, the tsar writes:

Count Kutuzov<sup>5</sup> has just left me and has given me his impressions. They are not reassuring or consoling. From day to day the emperor's nervous state grows worse and those about him are struck with the changeableness of his character and of his ideas. The progressive development of armaments makes the situation more alarming.

Prince Lobanov-Rostovski, Russian ambassador at Vienna, speaking of the refusal of Germany to renew arrangements with Russia, saw in it a very grave event. He had always thought not only that Kalnóky had been kept informed of the negotiation, but also that the check which it had received was probably due to the action of the cabinet of Vienna, which wished to reserve to itself the support of Germany in repulsing any attack on the part of Russia, even in case Austria should be the aggressor, though the latter, said the prince, was very improbable, "but the burden of the military armaments is such that nothing is certain".

<sup>5</sup> Count Golenishchev-Kutuzov, major-general in attendance, was attached to the person of the Emperor William.



On August 5, 1890, William II. came to Russia to be present at the manoeuvres at Narva, and General Caprivi came in his train. In his conversations with M. de Giers, the chancellor declared that there was a general desire for peace which removed every cloud from the political horizon, a desire which was especially lively and sincere on Germany's part. The predominant idea of the reign of William II. was, said Caprivi, to react against the increasing peril of socialism and to remove all that might threaten internal tranquillity and order. The emperor destined the considerable force under his control to the prosecution of this great object alone, and understood perfectly well that, for the attainment of that object, permanent peace in foreign affairs was absolutely necessary. M. de Giers endeavored to demonstrate to Caprivi that we desired to maintain and perpetuate the traditional bonds of cordial good feeling between the two countries, much less by means of written stipulations than by an uninterrupted flow of mutual confidence. He asked him frankly what was his point of view respecting the matters on which agreement had been established between Russia and Germany, specifically respecting Bulgarian affairs and the closing of the Straits. It appeared to us certain: (1) that after all the sacrifices which Russia had made in order to create Bulgaria she could never consent to sanction the illegal power which Prince Ferdinand was exercising in contravention of the stipulations of the treaty of Berlin; (2) that the principle of the closing of the Straits remained a European principle, incontestably binding on all the powers signatory to the treaties concluded between them. Caprivi recognized that our position on these two points was scrupulously in accord with the treaties in force, and declared that, so far as he was concerned, Germany entirely agreed with that position. The same assurances were received by the Emperor Alexander at the private audience which his Majesty accorded to the chancellor. The details of his conversation with Caprivi were reproduced by M. de Giers in a despatch of August 19, 1890, to Count Muraviev, Russian chargé d'affaires at Berlin, who was instructed to communicate this despatch and to obtain from the chancellor a written confirmation of all that had been said on that occasion. Caprivi was much surprised at such a request.

Why [said he], that seems to me entirely useless. I am completely resolved not to write down anything. You have been instructed to read me a despatch which, I agree, reproduces very faithfully the political views exchanged between M. de Giers and me; you have done so; but to address anything of the sort to you in writing, no; I have not the political strength of Bismarck, but I am loyal, and you can rely upon our loyalty, which will never fail you.

Count Muraviev hastened to say that he had acted on his own motion. The chancellor replied :

I know it well. M. de Giers could never have charged you to ask it of me, since I have often told him that I would absolutely refuse to give him anything in writing relating to our exchange of views on political questions. . .

I was about to rise [writes Muraviev], when the general said to me in German : " You, who have lived in Berlin a number of years, know better than anyone else, with what serious difficulties the government is obliged to contend in internal affairs. These difficulties are enormous, and in smoothing them out our sovereign, even if he were eager for triumphs, would find enough laurels to gather on this field, to make his reign, even if it were very long, much more glorious than if he should wish to make it illustrious by victories won on the field of battle. We desire peace above all things, and you ought to be convinced of it."

At the very moment that the Emperor of Germany and his chancellor, in their conversations with the Russian diplomats in Berlin and at St. Petersburg, were assuring the latter that their sole desire was to preserve the peace, William II., in opening the new session of the Reichstag, May 6, 1890, delivered a speech in which he declared in similar terms that the consolidation of universal peace upon durable bases was the object of all his efforts ; to secure it the alliances which Germany had concluded, for her defense, with Austria and with Italy, must be maintained ; but the surest means of guarantee lay nevertheless in the development of the military resources of the empire. According to the emperor's declaration, every change in the relative position of states endangered the political equilibrium and the prospects of success in all the efforts made for the maintenance of peace. Therefore Germany must be strong enough to have the upper hand in Europe and to make use of her preponderance to maintain equilibrium among the states. In line with these declarations a bill was introduced in the Reichstag increasing the peace strength of the army by 18,574 men. The supplementary proposals for the military budget were raised to eighteen million marks per annum. The minister of war, Verdy du Vernois, declared that this was but the first step in this direction, and that the German High Command would not stop in its course before it arrived at its objects. The general looked forward to the necessity, in time, of calling to the ranks of the army all the Germans liable to military service, without any exception, which would have increased the effective strength of the army in time of peace not by eighteen thousand but by fifty-five thousand men. This plan was supported by Field-Marshal von Moltke, who vindicated the urgency of this measure by referring to the armaments

made by the states bordering on the west and the east. The minister of war went still further; he declared that Germany ought to develop her military strength to such a point that it could not be either equalled or surpassed by any other power. By the superiority of her armament she counted on maintaining general peace in Europe and extending her rule without encountering resistance in the other quarters of the globe. Already Germany had taken possession of immense territories in West, Southwest, and East Africa, and of several groups of islands in Oceania and had founded colonies there. German expansion, especially in East Africa, had brought the Germans into collision with the English. This dispute was proving an obstacle to *rapprochement* between the cabinets of Berlin and London on general political questions.

As we have seen above, an accord was reached, to the great contentment of both of these powers. William II. in particular ardently desired such agreement. In a speech at Berlin on March 21, 1890, at a dinner in honor of the Prince of Wales, Albert Edward, and his son George, the emperor recalled the fact that the English and German armies had fought side by side at Waterloo and expressed the hope that the English fleet, joined with the German army and fleet, would devote itself to the preservation of peace in the times to come. In such a speech the Emperor William could have in view no other adversary than Russia.

This speech was delivered by William II. at dinner on March 9/21, the same day on which, early in the morning, he had received the Russian ambassador in special audience and had assured him of his sincere desire to renew the secret agreement with Russia, as well as of his fixed determination to follow the policy of his grandfather in his relations with foreign powers.

It was not without reason that the tsar Alexander III. noted at the foot of Shuvalov's despatch this remark: "We shall see by the sequel whether deeds correspond to words".

SERGE GORIAINOV.